



# E-Newsletter

*A Special Issue Honoring Joel Myerson*

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## JOEL MYERSON

**9 SEPTEMBER 1945-19 NOVEMBER 2021**

### Noelle A. Baker, ADE President

On 19 November 2021, the Association for Documentary Editing lost a foundational member of its community: Joel Myerson, Distinguished Professor Emeritus at the University of South Carolina. A renowned scholar of nineteenth-century American literature and culture, the author or editor of over sixty books, and an elected member of the American Antiquarian Society (1985), Joel was the recipient of many awards, including numerous grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities (1978-1981, 1988-1992, 1994-1997, 1997-1999), the American Philosophical Society (1984-1985), Guggenheim (1981-1982), and Fulbright (2002, 2005).

After joining the English Department at the University of South Carolina in 1971, Joel figured prominently there as a scholar, teacher, and administrator who freely bestowed his



Joel Myerson, image printed with permission from Greta Little.

capacious intellectual and material gifts. From 1987 to 1990, he served as chair of the department, where he was also recognized as Teacher of the Year (1997) and Faculty Mentor (1992). Moreover, and along with his partner, Greta Little, Joel placed his collection of over 11,000 volumes of nineteenth-century American literature and their joint collection of international children's literature in the university's special collections.

Joel led the ADE as president from 1989 to 1990, an active guidance he extended to numerous societies and scholarly organizations. He undertook significant governance positions within the Modern Language Association; moreover, Joel served as president of the Philological Association of the Carolinas, the Thoreau Society, the Ralph

Waldo Emerson Society, the Margaret Fuller Society, and the Louisa May Alcott Society. In a testimony to this outstanding pattern of leadership, the Association for Documentary Editing recognized Joel repeatedly, including the bestowal of its highest honor: the Julian P. Boyd Award (2016), shared with his dear friend and colleague Ronald A. Bosco. Joel was also the first literary editor to win the Lyman H. Butterfield Award (1995) for his scholarship, teaching, and service, and he was likewise granted the Distinguished Service Award (1986) to honor his successful efforts to attain affiliate status with the MLA and his ongoing committee work for the ADE since its inception.

Joel was an active and leading intellectual beacon until the day of his death. He was at work on several projects, among them, editing the *Account Books of Ralph Waldo Emerson* and updating his descriptive bibliographies of Emily Dickinson, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Margaret Fuller, and Walt Whitman. And so he lives on.

The recollections that conclude this special issue of the ADE E-newsletter celebrate Joel's life, his friendship, talents, professional gifts, and playful sense of humor, but we begin with Joel in his own voice: "The Politics of Editing," his 1990 presidential address at the ADE annual meeting in Charleston, South Carolina. Over thirty years after its delivery and publication in *Documentary Editing*, "The Politics of Editing" speaks presciently to our own cultural moment and to the challenges and promise we encounter as editors, teachers, and recovery scholars in 2022. Echoing that address, I trust his "words shall not pass away."

# "THE POLITICS OF EDITING"

## PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS AT THE ADE ANNUAL MEETING IN CHARLESTON, SC (OCTOBER 1990)

Joel Myerson

ADE President (1989-1990)

Earlier this month, while I was packing my hat and pencil cup to visit the funding agencies in Washington, the title of my address was brought home rather forcefully. The now-annual battle over the federal budget reduced all other issues, with gemlike clarity, down to one simple question: Would there be a government? And that question naturally gave birth to others: Would I discover that the doors of the National Endowment for the Humanities and the National Historical Publications and Records Commission were closed and padlocked? Would I find on these doors signs stating "Temporarily closed due to the lack of funds"? Would I need to take that sign home and hang it on the door of my own project? Had our great country become, after all, just another banana republic—and, at that, one without a jeep in the window and devoid of fancy clothing inside? If anyone ever questions the connections between politics and editing, then the first few days of October 1990 are guaranteed to dispel any possible doubts on the subject.

Virtually everything we do as editors is in some way political, be our methods (to use the tripartite definition of the *American Heritage Dictionary*) artful or shrewd, proceeding from policy, and/or crafty or cunning. When we choose the people whose works we will edit and when we decide upon the editorial policies we will use in our editions of their works, we usually base our decisions as much on politics as on sound scholarly principles.

Take, for example, the ways in which we select the people to whom we devote our editions. The earliest historical and literary editors chose as their subjects white males—and more often than not, ones possessing luxurious beards. The choice was obvious: white males had made visible early contributions both to the history and to the culture of our country. They were called, depending on our disciplines, "The Founding Fathers" (a phrase that Herman Melville would have delighted over as being "spermatic" in the extreme) or "The Major Writers of American Literature." Politically, though, these choices reinforced the cultural assumptions that predominated during the period when these men lived—times when nonwhites and females were denied access to the mainstream of American life. There were no black presidents, no female generals, and—even worse—no female authors who were considered worth studying.

This latter point is an especially sensitive one to me because I am a scholar of nineteenth-century American literature who has published a number of books on Margaret Fuller and Louisa May Alcott. The study of nineteenth-century American literature seems to have gone through two phases. In the first phase, the greatest American author was the composite Bryant-Longfellow-Holmes-Emerson-Whittier-Lowell; in the second phase, he was Poe-Hawthorne-Melville-Emerson-Thoreau-Whitman. In both phases, the greatest American author was defined by mirror images of himself—white males, who were often graced with beards. Kermit Vanderbilt, in his *American Literature and the Academy: The Roots, Growth, and Maturity of a Profession* (1986), which traces the history of the discipline in the twentieth century, provides thirty-nine illustrations of the participants, of whom five have beards and only one of which is a woman.

This is not to suggest that the first subjects of documentary and critical editions were undeserving of being edited—though I continue to be puzzled by the fact that the first modern edition of an American writer was that done in 1945 of Sidney Lanier. It does, however, suggest that the process of selecting the subjects for the earliest modern editions was often subtly and not-so-subtly informed by issues unrelated to the importance of a historical figure or the quality of a writer's works. In a real way, these choices reflected contemporary values and the people who made them.

In this context, we cannot ignore the important influence that textbooks have had on the politics of editing. One reason we edit texts is to have people use them: we make new texts available, and we provide more accurate versions of texts that are already in use. From the nineteenth century on, textbooks were compiled by white males and reflected their patriarchal perspective. Rufus Griswold, for example, published his nearly all-white-male *The Poets and Poetry of America* in 1842, relegating women to a separate but not really equal volume of *The Female Poets of America* (1849). Many nineteenth-century anthologies of American literature failed to include any women writers, an unfortunate condition that extended into the early twentieth century. Even as late as the 1960s, the only nineteenth-century woman writer given significant space in textbooks of American literature was Emily Dickinson, who had the twin virtues of being “discovered” by a male writer (Thomas Wentworth Higginson) and being weird to boot. Textbook publishers needed works by white male writers for inclusion in their volumes, which were often read by predominantly or even exclusively white male audiences, and editors helped to meet that demand.

All of these points touch upon the larger battle over canonicity that is now being waged in literary circles. For historians, a parallel might be the shifting roles that blacks and women have played in narrative textbooks of American history: as these groups became less marginalized, as they were seen as contributors to the growth of American culture rather than as hindrances to it or ciphers in its development, there has been a call for their writings to be made accessible. The politics of meeting the needs of textbook arbiters and cultural critics has remained constant over time—today, however, the pendulum is swinging in a different direction.

As I move on now to the politics of funding, I am struck by the redundancy of the phrase. Funding is by nature political. Would Southern Illinois University fund an edition of Andrew Jackson's papers? Or the Hermitage one of Ulysses Grant's? Of course not. Politics, as well as logic, dictates certain relationships between funders and fundees. In many cases, though, politics alone becomes the most crucial aspects of funding for editions.

The importance played by large-scale federal funding for scholarly editions is a force that has entered academe at a rather late date. Although the National Historical Publications Commission was created by Congress in 1934, it did not directly offer money to projects until 1964. Literary editions were first funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities in 1966, although a few projects had earlier received monies from the Office of Education of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. And every edition funded at the beginning was of a white male's writings. The only difference from earlier days was that the people who decided which authors would comprise the canon no longer had beards.

The impact that real money had on the world of editing was immediate and visible, particularly in the field of literary editing. No longer did editors need to teach summer school, and their garages often sported new-model cars and even boats. There was no doubt about it: “Cadillac” editions had replaced the “Nash Rambler” editions of old. The timing could not have been better: money began flowing generously just as New Criticism placed an emphasis on the importance of reading individual texts for the intrinsic value of what they themselves contained rather than on the external biographical or historical interpretations of those texts. The New Critics needed reliable texts upon which to base their readings, and a generation of editors suddenly sprang up to supply these wants.

The serpent in this otherwise luxurious garden was of course money. No longer was the importance of an edition the prime consideration for undertaking it; rather, some people needed a positive answer to the question “Is it fundable?” even before beginning a project. Scholarly objectivity was often blinded by the bright gleam of gold. At its worst, we saw para-editors selling their Greg-Bowers pistols to the highest bidder: their motto, “Have Hinman collator, will travel.”

But at its best, the influx of federal funds opened up editing to those who had previously been disenfranchised. Women and blacks paid taxes; just as they represented a source for federal funding, so, too, did they now become a beneficiary of it. Editions of writings by women and blacks were funded, and because of this action, their writings were made available in ways that would have been impossible before. And as these new texts became accessible, new interpretations of American literature, history, and culture were

made possible. The old cycle repeated itself, but for the better: new interpretations demanded even more new texts, and the people who had been excluded from anthologies were now included by both critical and popular demand.

At its best, the rise of editing as a respectable and fundable profession paralleled the establishment of federal funding for editorial projects to result in a synergetic relationship from which everyone was a winner—funding agencies, scholars, and readers alike. Unfortunately, this relationship is now under serious attack from people like the senior senator from North Carolina, who was brilliantly portrayed in a recent “Kudzu” cartoon as saying (*vide* the United Negro College Fund’s motto), “A mind is a terrible thing. Period.” I think it fair to say that in the present political climate neither the National Endowment for the Arts nor the National Endowment for the Humanities will soon fund a catalogue raisonné of the works of Robert Mapplethorpe. We should all be concerned when political considerations become not *one* of the considerations for funding decisions but *the* consideration. We all hope that—in the philosopher’s words—this too shall pass.

Another political concern of editors is their choice of editorial methods—the politics, if you will, of editorial theory. I am here tonight—as are all of you—as is the Association of Documentary Editing itself—because of this. Both the Association for Documentary Editing and its sister organization, the Society for Textual Scholarship, came about in main part because of the need to provide outlets for discussions of editorial theories. But I am also here tonight as an after-dinner speaker, and so I will skip lightly over this thorny subject. [Here the speaker skippeth lightly.]

Politics also plays a role in how people use our editions. How many books carry an acknowledgment to the effect that its completion would have been impossible without the publication of the primary documents upon which its researches are based? Too few, I regret to say. It is almost as if some authors feel that in giving us credit for our editions they are somehow diluting their own achievement as a biographer or their acumen as a literary critic. We are too often portrayed as harmless drones who perform the uncreative drudge work that is nevertheless necessary before more creative minds can make something substantial out of it. This depiction of the editor as medieval scribe, transmitting the great words of the past for use by the great minds of the present, with nary a thought contributed by the scribe during the entire process is sadly all too common. But this leads into a discussion of academic politics, and that *definitely* is not a fit subject for an after-dinner talk.

The politics of editing might profitably be compared to a series of Chinese boxes, one fitting inside another and inside another and inside another until—at last—the smallest possible box remains. If we open that last box and find nothing inside, then we have become more interested in politics than in editing. But if that last box contains an object of substance, then we have played the game knowing all along that we were doing it to discover or to create something of value. And we may then echo the words of Luke with which I close my address: “Heaven and earth shall pass away; but my words shall not pass away.”

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## COMMUNITY TRIBUTES

### REMEMBERING JOEL

**Noelle A. Baker**

ADE President (2021-2022)

Co-editor, *The Almanacks of Mary Moody Emerson: A Scholarly Digital Edition*

It is with a heavy heart that I reflect upon the unexpected death of Joel Myerson. Joel was a cherished colleague and friend, and his absence will be felt profoundly. In addition to the landmark scholarship that shaped several fields, Joel will always be known for his matchless generosity. I know of no other scholar who has opened as many doors and presented such valuable professional advancement to so many.

Joel blazed a remarkable trail, including scholarship on Ralph Waldo Emerson and American Transcendentalism, Concord authors, textual and bibliographical studies, textual editing, and children’s literature. His work was foundational in recuperating the reputation and writings of Margaret Fuller. He established and edited the journal *Studies in the American Renaissance* (1977-1996), curated international exhibits, and was the author or editor of over sixty books and editions on Louisa May Alcott, Emerson and his family, Emily Dickinson, Margaret Fuller, Transcendentalism, and Walt Whitman.

On the day of Joel’s death, I was in touch with a number of ADE members, and a common thread immediately emerged, highlighting his commanding knowledge, deep generosity, playful skill as a raconteur, and outsized presence in any room. Further, and as one long-time ADE member and former president observed aptly, “He was the soul and essence of the ADE.”

Speaking for myself, I will always remember Joel at the dinner table or pub, regaling friends and colleagues with his keen wit and sharp insights (including recommendations for the best craft beer on the menu for every palate). Despite his prominent stature, Joel treated all with respect, and with a unique willingness to enable the work of emerging scholars. In an early encounter with Joel as a graduate student, I cautiously approached him in an elevator with an idea. Joel dispelled my hesitation quickly by listening patiently, even jotting a few lines in his pocket-notebook, as if he were learning from my discovery.

I was not his student, but thereafter, Joel repeatedly extended advice, encouragement, letters of reference, and archival leads, and he continued to offer professional opportunities at every stage of my career, perhaps most notably after I became an independent scholar. On one occasion and precisely because of my unaffiliated status, I was required to produce a letter of support to work in a prestigious library. Little did I know that I was about to witness a classic Myerson put-down. Joel composed a politely scathing missive prefaced by a refusal to confer the dignity of title or even name upon the addressee and institutional head. "Dear librarian," he began dismissively, before enumerating my credentials as a textual scholar and implying further that only an idiot could imagine "Dr. Baker" mishandling the repository's precious manuscripts.

The last email I received from Joel—just a few weeks before his death—exemplified his friendship. I hadn't asked for help, but he had become aware that I might need it, and empathy was one of his gifts. I am profoundly saddened by the loss of Joel Myerson but also immensely grateful to have been granted the privilege of his company, kindness, and wisdom.

## READING, WRITING, AND EDITING WITH JOEL

**Ronald A. Bosco**

ADE President (2006-2007)

Emerson Editions

Joel and I first met in Cambridge, MA, in the early 1970s. It was an accidental meeting, since I was at the Houghton Library seeking details to round out my edition of Cotton Mather's *Paterna*, an autobiographical manuscript he wrote for his sons that was my doctoral dissertation at Maryland. Joel was immersed in bibliographical research, and since he and I were calling up a substantial number of books, the Houghton staff decided that the two of us along with our piles of books would do best dispatched to the outside corners beyond the doors into the Houghton. One research characteristic we initially noticed about each other is that neither of us took gratuitous breaks; rather, we merrily worked on our research at hand. When the Houghton closed that day, we walked out together and had a modest dinner at a nearby pub.

The following year we met up again in Cambridge; I had completed my degree, landed at SUNY Albany, and along with that post had been invited by Harry Orth to join the *Emerson Journals and Miscellaneous Notebooks* edition. Among Emerson editors during the period from the mid-1970s and into the mid-1980s was the merger of members of the *Journals and Miscellaneous Notebooks* edition with the *Collected Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson* edition for housing purposes in Cambridge, where the editors of those editions pursued their research at the Houghton and Widener Libraries. Harry Orth and Joe Slater pooled a portion of grants they received for the

two editions for housing of the editors. The large Victorian “Snow House” on the grounds of the Episcopal Divinity School that backed up to the remnants of Longfellow’s apple orchard became editors’ home away from home for the summer. Joel worked out an arrangement with Harry and Joe and thus became the editions’ tenant.

Editors of Emerson’s *Journals and Miscellaneous Notebooks*, *Topical Notebooks*, *Poetry Notebooks*, and *Collected Works* editions maintained a genuine respect for each other’s work, and would in time rely heavily on the bibliographical treasures that Joel discovered and put into print during his time with us. The founding generations of these editions were also intent on making sure that important editorial work that remained to be done after the completion of those editions would have a group of editors ready to fill the gap should individual editors not be able to do the work themselves. In this connection, Joel and I made what we believed ranked among our major contributions to Emerson studies: the publication of his later lectures, the materials for which were generously provided to us by the late Wallace Williams and the executor of his estate, the collection and editing of the correspondence of the Emerson brothers, to which the Emerson family as a whole contributed generously by providing us with access to all such materials in their possession, and the completion of the Harvard Edition of *The Collected Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, with me as General Editor and Joel as Textual Editor.

## IN MEMORY OF JOEL MYERSON

### Carol DeBoer Langworthy

ADE President (2011-2012)

Neith Boyce Papers

And then came Joel Myerson. His Hawaiian shirts at the ADE conventions signaled that this was Fun Time.[1] Joel was for Having Fun. Huh? One of the most productive documentary editors on the planet was able to play? This challenged every stereotype I had built up over the years about professional documentary editors, as did Joel’s encyclopedic knowledge of craft beers across the U.S. and just *exactly* where to dine in any given city. I once asked one of Joel’s associates if it were really true that Joel had Fun on a regular basis. “Yes,” said the informant [I’m paraphrasing from memory], “he can turn from an obscure document to the latest murder mystery on a dime.” Hmm’mmm. The major co-editor of the American Transcendentalist writers and thinkers knew how to **play**!? Maybe there’s something in that, and I should give it a try. Perhaps it is true that productive people know when to hit the Off switch. If Joel’s career is a valid example, Fun actually is part of documentary editing.

The other intellectual gift from Joel was his characterization of those Transcendentalists as real human beings. I’ll never get over that mental image of Bronson Alcott and Emerson philosophizing while walking in a stream and stark naked. Somehow knowledge of that and Emerson’s bank ledgers both make those elevated Emerson essays more accessible. Joel also broached the role of women in the Transcendentalist circle, thus stimulating some

fascinating documentary contributions to U.S. history. Emerson's relationship to his aunt, Mary Moody Emerson, illuminates how women's ideas affected Emerson's philosophizing—or not. Much good work by others has been based on Joel and Ron Bosco's heroic efforts over the years. And it is comforting to think of their having Fun while doing it.

After I took over the liaisonship to the Modern Language Association from Joel in 2010, our glancing friendship grew stronger and more Fun. He was now free to really attend MLA without the responsibility of running ADE's guaranteed session at the convention. Initially I hoped to replicate Joel's generous receptions in a hotel suite after the ADE session. Alas, my institution's administration did not understand the power of socializing in intellectual work. So no big cocktail parties in a hotel suite with food and drink for dozens. Alas, ADE's the poorer for it.

[1] Hawaiian shirts now are seen as exploitative and a function of colonialism, but we're reporting on earlier times.

## MEMORIES OF JOEL AND ADE

### Helen R. Deese

Caroline Healey Dall Editor,  
Massachusetts Historical Society

*Selected Journals of Caroline Healey Dall*

*Complete Poems of Jones Very*

Early in the history of the Association for Documentary Editing, early in my own career as an English professor, and before I really knew anything about “documentary editing,” I

accompanied my Tennessee Tech colleague and mentor Guy Woodall to the 1982 annual meeting of the association in Columbia, South Carolina. It was a fateful occasion: there a new world of scholarly activity was revealed to me, one in which I am still active, and there I met Joel Myerson, the person who arguably would have the most influence on the course of that activity. Joel and Greta Little hospitably hosted us at a reception in their home, and I began to become acquainted with this emerging scholar who had already established and was editing an annual, *Studies in the American Renaissance*, that would run for two decades. I found Joel personable, sincerely interested in me and my work (although at the time I was nobody and my work very minimal), and willing to provide direction to a newcomer to the profession. As a direct result of this meeting, *Studies* became the outlet for my earliest documentary editing efforts, and Joel became, increasingly over the years, my reliable advisor, supporter, and friend.

As my fellow members of ADE will remember, there was another side to Joel than that of the serious scholar. As a sometime member of the appropriately designated “rowdy table” at the ADE banquet, I had plenty of opportunity to appreciate Joel's fun-loving side. The hilarity generated at this table, sometimes raucous, was another demonstration of the camaraderie that Joel fostered.

I am certain that my story is essentially the story of scores of scholars whom Joel encouraged and supported. This living legacy of generations of his students and protégés is, I believe, one to rival the remarkable legacy of his publications.

## A TRIBUTE TO JOEL

### Mary-Jo Kline

ADE President (2001-2002)

Editor-in-Chief, *The Papers of Aaron Burr* (1975-1981)

It's impossible to explain how much I owe Joel Myerson for decades of professional encouragement and support within the ADE and for the welcome my husband and I received in the personal circle of comradeship and outrageous laughter he and his wife Greta provided. I'll just say that in the world of documentary editing I never found a better friend or a better scholar.

## CONVERSATIONS WITH JOEL

### Barbara Oberg

ADE President (1993-1994)

*The Papers of Benjamin Franklin*

*The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*

Joel was a smart, engaged, and caring member of the ADE. He was important to the organization because he was a celebrated literary scholar who also read and liked history. Perhaps I was drawn to him because, although I was a history major, I took several courses in the English Department. He respected and enjoyed being with members of the ADE who were historians. He realized that the organization was stronger because it had members from different fields. At the meetings, Joel and I enjoyed both informal conversations—about families, life in graduate school, travels—and serious discussions, like the state of universities. We would talk about the sessions we had attended and papers we heard. Sometimes we discussed the ADE as an organization and how it was doing. Since both of us had served as president we recognized the challenges it

faced: retaining members and trying to attract new ones; keeping the finances in shape and increasing the revenue. We wanted the ADE to thrive.

There was another side to Joel, and I can't talk about him without mentioning one of his contributions to ADE meetings: the Rowdy Table, where lively conversations, sometimes rather noisy, or Rowdy, went on. Joel was an active and enthusiastic participant. Without him it might have been the Dull Table.

## JOEL MYERSON—A TRIBUTE

### Constance B. Schulz

ADE President (2020-2021)

Editor, *The Papers of Eliza Lucas Pinckney and Harriott Pinckney Horry*

Editor, *The Papers of the Revolutionary Era Pinckney Statesmen*

Although the expression might be trite, in this case it is accurate: the Association of Documentary Editing has lost a giant among us. Joel Myerson, who died of a heart attack on the porch of his home at Edisto Beach, South Carolina at the age of 76, has been a leader in the field of literary scholarly editing for four decades. A wonderful mentor, an award-winning teacher, and a prolific editor and author of monographs, he had a profound impact not only on the study of transcendentalism and the Concord authors, but on the practice and teaching of textual editing and bibliographic studies.

An alumnus of Tulane University with graduate degrees in English from Northwestern University, Joel joined the Department of English Language and Literature at the University of South Carolina in 1971, where he taught nineteenth-century American literature for the

next forty years. He was an excellent teacher, winning English department “Faculty Mentor” and “Teacher of the Year” awards. He worked cooperatively with other departments on campus, encouraging his graduate students to study history and other disciplines related to the literary materials they were editing or analyzing. I served on several Ph.D. dissertation committees with him both in his department and mine (History), and he was both demanding and supportive of his students. His teaching, as well as his research, contributed to his receiving Fulbright awards to Japan in 2002, and to New Zealand in 2005.

Joel is most widely known, however, for his editorial contributions to the field of American literature, in particular for his editions of the works of Ralph Waldo Emerson. He was one of the early leaders in the field of literary editing in his insistence that women authors should receive as much attention—and funding—in the careful editorial preparation and publication of their authentic texts as male authors. Beginning with *Emily Dickinson: A Descriptive Bibliography* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 1984) and continuing with *The Journals of Louisa May Alcott* (edited with Daniel Shealy and Madeleine B. Stern, Little, Brown, 1989) and *Margaret Fuller, Critic: Writings in the New-York Tribune, 1844-1846* (with Judith Mattson Bean, Columbia University Press, 2000), he practiced what he preached. Although later in his career he concentrated on editing Emerson’s writings, he continued for more than three decades to be supportive of other editors of women’s writings, and was a member and president (2000-2002) of the Margaret Fuller Society, and of the Louisa May Alcott Society (president 2005-2008).

We in ADE, of course, can be particularly proud of the role he played in our organization. He was one of the ADE founders, part of an

important effort in the late 1970s to bring together literary, historical, and philosophical editors in a single organization to discuss and compare editorial policies, approaches, and practices, to learn from each other, and to advocate together for increased funding for the work that we do. I first met Joel in October 1980 at the ADE meeting in Williamsburg, Virginia, a memorable conference in which historians and literary editors ardently debated transcription practices. Joel was an active presence at almost every ADE meeting from its founding, serving willingly and often on committees, and as president from 1989 to 1990.

Social media is fond of quoting Emerson (usually without attribution to a specific source) for uplifting inspiration. One quote that appears frequently on Facebook and Twitter is this: “To laugh often and much; to win the respect of intelligent people and the affection of children; to earn the appreciation of honest critics and endure the betrayal of false friends; to appreciate beauty; to find the beauty in others; to leave the world a bit better . . . This is to have succeeded.” In all these things, Joel Myerson was an inspiring success. And he could have told the reader whether, when, and where Emerson actually wrote it.

## ON MEETING JOEL MYERSON

### Michael Stevens

ADE President (2007-2008)

When I moved to South Carolina in 1978, the documentary editing community was small and clustered in Columbia. Early in my time there, the late George Rogers took me around campus and introduced me to others with shared interests. Joel Myerson was one of those that I met that day. Our conversation was brief (and witty) but after George and I moved

on to meet others, I thought to myself, “This is one interesting guy.” That turned out to be an understatement. Joel could easily be spotted at ADE meetings, either because of his love for loud Hawaiian shirts, his witty retorts, or the power of his personality. And although he liked to call whatever table he sat at during ADE banquets “the rowdy table,” underneath the power of his personality, there was a quick mind, a sense of the absurd, and perhaps most important, kindness and willingness to help. Joel was a person who could easily fill up a room—and that room is a little emptier now.

## IN MEMORY OF JOEL

### Beth Witherell

ADE President (1992-1993)

Editor-in-Chief, *The Writings of Henry D. Thoreau*

Joel was a good friend for a long time. For many years, I counted on seeing him regularly at meetings and events for several groups we both got pretty deeply involved in—the Thoreau Society and the Association for Documentary Editing and the Modern Language Association. Some of these occasions focused mostly on academic presentations and some were celebrations, but we also labored together on several knotty organizational issues. Even when the task at hand wasn’t fun, working with him was a pleasure: he was always engaged and generous and supportive, and you could rely on him to follow through.

By his example, Joel pushed us all to work harder and to be better editors and scholars. He mentored students and encouraged colleagues, and he also built enduring resources for us. He created bibliographies and editions and collections of essays himself

and in collaboration with others. He established *Studies in the American Renaissance*, an exceptionally valuable repository of primary materials. In addition to his service to Thoreauvians he led associations devoted to making the works and lives of Ralph Waldo Emerson, Margaret Fuller, and Louisa May Alcott widely known. He and Greta also gathered collections in the course of pursuing their scholarly interests—the Joel Myerson Collection of Nineteenth-Century American Literature and the Greta D. Little and Joel Myerson Collection of Multi-Cultural Children’s Literature—and made them accessible by placing them in the Irvin Department of Rare Books and Special Collections at the University of South Carolina.

Joel’s energy and his drive and his intelligence left an indelible impression on me. Somehow, against all evidence, I expected that he would always be with us. I’ll miss him.

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